

REMARKS

In response to the Restriction Requirement, Applicants hereby elect the claims of Group II, corresponding to claims 16-32. Claims 1-15 are cancelled as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

In response to the species election, Applicants hereby elect the species directed to blended fibrous products. Claims 24 and 25 read on this species election. Claims 29, 30 and 31 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 16-23, 26-28 and 32 are generic to the species election. Thus, if any of the generic claims are held allowable, it is respectfully requested that the withdrawn claims 29, 30 and 31 be allowed as well.

In the Office Action, the Examiner also requested a concise explanation of the relevant references submitted in the Information Disclosure Statements submitted by Applicants. In order to assist the Examiner, Applicants respond as follows.

Some of the more relevant references cited in Applicants' Information Disclosure Statements include PCT International Publication No. WO 00/56972 to Branham, et al. which relates to methods for treating substrates for ink jet printing and articles produced therefrom. More particularly, the invention described in Branham relates to coating formulations and methods to improve the adhesion properties and/or color fastness/color density and washfastness of ink jet printable substrates in the absence of a post treatment curing step such as heating, radiation or chemical treatment. The method includes treating a textile substrate with a formulation including between about 5 to 95% cationic polymers or copolymers, and between 5 to 20% fabric softeners. Examples of cationic polymers are listed on pages 7 and 8 of the PCT publication, while on page 9, various fabric softeners are listed.

U.S. Patent No. 6,200,354 to Collins is directed to a method of dyeing cellulosic fibers or fabrics using a premetalized acid dye by pretreating the fabric with a cationic agent having a plurality of cationic centers and optionally after treating the dyed material with a cationic polymer. The cationic polymer may be a polyquaternary amine material.

PCT International Publication No. WO 01/32974 to Bagwell, et al. is directed to a method of producing a printed substrate so as to improve the adhesion, colorfastness, and washfastness of either reactive or acid dye-based ink jet inks printed onto a substrate. Steps of this method include providing a substrate, treating the substrate with an aqueous coating formulation comprising a cationic polymer or copolymer, a fabric softener, treating

the substrate with an imbibing aqueous solution, such as urea, drying the substrate, printing the substrate with either an acid or reactive dye-based ink, and post treating the printed substrate.

U.S. Patent No. 5,064,909 to Itagaki is directed to a vinylamine copolymer, a flocculating agent for the treatment of wastewater using the vinylamine copolymer, and a paper strength increasing agent using the vinylamine copolymer.

PCT International Publication No. WO 00/34583 to Lauzon is directed to a stabilized emulsified or dispersed composition comprising a hydrophobic phase and an aqueous phase. The emulsified or dispersed composition may be used as a sizing composition. The composition is stabilized by a cationic colloidal coacervate stabilizing agent. The coacervate stabilizing agent comprises an anionic component and a cationic component. The cationic component may be, for instance, a polyamine.

PCT International Publication No. WO 01/35924 to Smith, et al. is directed to personal care articles comprising anionic polymer coacervate compositions. Personal care articles relate to those articles suitable for cleansing and/or therapeutically treating the skin, hair and any other sites in need of such treatment. The articles comprise a water insoluble substrate and a therapeutic benefit component disposed adjacent to the water insoluble substrate. The therapeutic benefit composition comprises an anionic polymer and a cationic surfactant.

U.S. Patent No. 5,529,585 to Schrell is directed to modified cellulose fiber. The fiber is produced by adding a modifier to a cellulose solution and spinning fibers from the solution, or by adding a modifier to a viscose solution and spinning fibers by the viscose spinning process. The modifier is a polymeric amine compound which are particularly described in column 2.

European Patent Application No. 0,337,310 to Becher is directed to a method for preparing a paperboard product by depositing wood pulp from an aqueous slurry containing an effective amount of poly(vinyl alcohol-vinylamine) as a moist compressive strength additive mixture.

U.S. Patent No. 6,022,449 to Jansen discloses water-dispersible polyisocyanates with anionic and/or potentially anionic groups and cationic and/or potentially cationic compounds. The composition is for higher retention and to improve dry and wet strength and sizing.

U.S. Patent No. 5,281,307 to Smigo discloses a polyvinyl alcohol/vinylamine copolymer and a crosslinking agent combination that are added at the dry end step of a conventional papermaking process.

The Examiner's attention is also directed to German Patent No. 19713755 which relates to a method for producing high dry-strength paper, pulpboard and cardboard by adding cationic, anionic and/or amphoteric starch as a dry-strength agent to the paper material, dehydrating the paper material to form sheets in the presence of cationic polymers as starch retention agents, and using cationic polymer retention agents to increase retention of dry-strength agents made from cationic, anionic and/or amphoteric starch during the production of paper, pulpboard and cardboard.

U.S. Patent Nos. 2,721,140; 3,556,932; 3,556,933; 3,700,623; 3,772,076; 3,899,388; 4,129,528; 4,147,586; 4,210,489; 4,222,921; 4,774,285; 4,808,683; 4,818,341; 4,880,497; 4,978,427; 5,085,736; 6,264,791; 6,322,665; PCT International Publication No. WO 01/34903 and PCT International Publication No. WO 01/83887 all disclose strength agents for paper, such as wet-strength agents, dry-strength agents, permanent strength agents and temporary strength agents. At least some of the above listed patents disclose the use of polyvinylamines.

U.S. Patent Nos. 3,225,074; 4,069,159; 4,654,161; 4,776,965; 5,070,168; 5,070,171; 5,073,619; 5,098,979; 5,120,812; 5,149,765; 5,196,499; 5,237,035; 5,614,598; 6,030,675; 6,175,028; and 6,201,093 all disclose silicones or polysiloxanes that may be used, for instance, as a softening agent.

PCT International Publication No. WO 00/50462, PCT International Publication No. WO 00/11046, European Patent Application No. 1,077,285, and European Patent Application No. 1,077,286 all disclose aldehyde modified cellulose.

U.S. Patent No. 5,269,942, U.S. Patent No. 5,292,441 and European Patent Application No. 0,668,245 all disclose the use of quaternized polyvinylamine for use in water clarification.

U.S. Patent No. 6,224,714, U.S. Patent No. 6,274,667, and PCT International Publication No. WO 00/43428 are directed to synthetic polymers having hydrogen bonding capability and one or more polysiloxane moieties for providing two distinct properties to paper products. The backbone of the synthetic polymers is based on modified vinyl polymers.

U.S. Patent No. 4,684,439, U.S. Patent No. 5,961,782 and European Patent Application No. 0,743,172 disclose creping adhesives that may contain a polyvinylamine.

U.S. Patent No. 5,232,553 is directed to the use of polyvinylaminals for improving the retention of fines in a final paper product.

U.S. Patent No. 6,176,973 discloses an absorbent cellulose product that includes cross-linked cellulose fibers. The cellulose fibers are cross linked with a polymer, which may possess free acid or aldehyde groups.

U.S. Patent No. 5,507,914 is directed to a process for enhancing the freeness of papermaking pulp. Water soluble cationic coagulants may be used in the invention including a polyvinylamine.

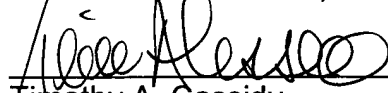
PCT International Publication No. WO 01/04247 discloses a process for producing particles of amine reaction product.

It is believed that the above identified references represent some of the more relevant references identified in Applicants' Information Disclosure Statements. The Examiner, however, should review all of the references and make her own determination. Applicants hope that the above summary is helpful to the Examiner. If the Examiner would like to discuss any of the references, she is invited to telephone the undersigned at her convenience.

In summary, it is respectfully submitted that the claims as currently pending are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. Favorable action on the merits is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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